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Cc: CN=Robert Hargrove/OU=DC/O=USEPA/C=US@EPA[]
From: CN=Matt Bogoshian/OU=DC/O=USEPA/C=US
Sent: Mon 8/9/2010 12:35:49 PM
Subject: NEPA

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Hi Susan,

I saw this article in the news clips this morning and, although unlikely from the tenor of the article, wondered if there is a NEPA review expected.

Thanks for letting me know what you think the permitting action will be and when that could occur.

Matt

News Headline: Alaska fishermen up in arms against proposed mammoth mine |

Outlet Full Name: Lexington Herald-Leader - Online

News OCR Text: DILLINGHAM, Alaska -- It is an unfortunate coincidence of geography that this lush region of wild rivers, grassy tundra and windy sea is home to two competing treasures of almost unimaginable value: the world's largest sockeye salmon run, supporting a fishery worth \$440 million a year; and in the hills behind it, a massive deposit of copper, molybdenum and gold worth at least \$300 billion.

With that much money at stake, preventing the construction of what could be the largest open-pit mine in North America - at headwaters above Bristol Bay - seems an impossible task.

As Pebble Ltd. Partnership prepares to submit its permit application outlining what kind of mine it wants to build by late this year or early next, Bristol Bay fishermen are fighting a fierce advance assault, hoping to convince government decision-makers and the public that poisonous mine drainage and some of the world's last pristine salmon streams are a combination too risky to contemplate.

"The location could not possibly be worse on the face of the earth," said former state Senate President Rick Halford, a Republican from the Bristol Bay region. "This is a place of incredible value. It's going to be probably the biggest environmental resource fight of our lifetime."

Last week, Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lisa Jackson met with dozens of mine opponents at Dillingham High School, where tribal leaders and commercial fishermen began a push to have the EPA wield its veto authority.

For many fishermen here, it is inconceivable that an industrial-scale mine that could produce 8 billion tons of waste is being contemplated in an area home to rare, healthy runs of all five species of salmon. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar earlier this year called the area "simply too special to drill" and placed it off-limits to offshore oil and gas development.

"It is a national treasure that we must protect," Salazar said.

Construction of the mine would bring an unprecedented level of industrial development to a region known until now for its majestic solitude. It would require an 86-mile road and miles of pipelines straddling salmon streams, a deepwater port in Cook Inlet, a power plant capable of generating up to 300

megawatts of electricity and 200 miles of power transmission lines.

Pebble Ltd. Partnership has withdrawn the 2006 permit applications that originally outlined the project and company officials say they no longer know the scope of what they will propose. The initial plan included an open pit possibly 2 square miles in size, with tailings impoundments of at least 10 square miles, behind embankments up to 740 feet high.

Since then, Pebble has acquired additional land and discovered even more mineral deposits. But the company has hinted that it will limit the size of the project if the environmental risks are too great.

"One of our core operating principles is to be able to demonstrate coexistence with the fishery. It's not going to be one industry at the expense of another," said Mike Heatwole, spokesman for the partnership, a 50-50 venture between London-based global mining company Anglo American and Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. of Canada.

The state Legislature has appropriated \$750,000 for a full scientific review of the project's potential impacts on Bristol Bay, with a series of independent science panels scheduled to begin public meetings in December.

But at last week's meeting with the EPA, many local residents said they fear the meetings are aimed at railroading approval for the mine.

The Pebble Mine is only the largest of several being contemplated on 1.1 million acres of the Bristol Bay watershed.

It would lie near the headwaters of the Kvichak and Nushagak rivers and just north of the 1,000-square-mile Lake Iliamna, nursery of many of the sockeye salmon.

Here in Dillingham and other communities along the bay, many fishermen fear that even a small amount of toxic copper sulfide generated when copper is mined - leached through the porous rock or leaked from a broken pipe - could be fatal to the fish that are their livelihood.

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